

#15/ Brief
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[Signature]

Docket No. 486.37843CC2

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:)

Wojick et al.)

Serial No.: 09/083,681)

Filed: May 22, 1998)

Group Art Unit: 2163

Examiner: Stamber, E.

For: **SYSTEM FOR MANAGING CUSTOMER ORDERS AND METHOD OF IMPLEMENTATION**

APPELLANT'S BRIEF UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.192

RECEIVED

AUG 27 2001

Assistant Commissioner of Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Technology Center 2100

Sir:

This is an Appellant's Brief in support of the appeal of the final rejections of claims 9, 19 and 20 under 35 USC §103 as unpatentable over Shavit et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,799,156, claims 10-16 under 35 USC §103 as unpatentable over Roach et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,434,394 in view of Shavit et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,799,156, and claims 17-18 under 35 USC §103 as unpatentable over Schlafly, U.S. Patent No. 4,734,858, in view of Roach et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,434,394, and further in view of Shavit et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,799,156, asserted in the final Office Action mailed February 23, 2001.

A Notice of Appeal was timely filed on May 23, 2001. In accordance with the requirements of 37 C.F.R. §1.192, this Appellant's Brief is timely filed in triplicate by August 23, 2001, along with a Petition for a One Month Extension of Time.

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If any further fees are required in connection with the filing of this Appeal Brief, please charge Deposit Account No. 01-2135 for Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP Account No. 01-2135 (Case No. 486.37843CC2)

(1) REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is Lykes Brothers, Inc.

(2) RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

No related appeals or interferences are known to the undersigned as of the date that this Appeal Brief is being filed.

(3) STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 9, 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 USC §103 as unpatentable over Shavit et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,799,156. Claims 10-16 were rejected under 35 USC §103 as unpatentable over Roach et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,434,394 in view of Shavit et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,799,156. Claims 17-18 were rejected under 35 USC §103 as unpatentable over Schlafly, U.S. Patent No. 4,734,858, in view of Roach et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,434,394, and further in view of Shavit et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,799,156. These rejections were asserted in the Final Office Action mailed February 23, 2001.

A copy of the text of claims 9-20, the rejections of which have been appealed, is attached as an Appendix to this Brief.

(4) STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

On February 23, 2001, a final Office Action was mailed, rejecting claims 9, 19 and 20 under 35 USC §103 as unpatentable over Shavit et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,799,156, claims 10-16 were rejected under 35 USC §103 as unpatentable over Roach et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,434,394 in view of Shavit et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,799,156, and claims 17-18 were rejected under 35 USC §103 as unpatentable over Schlafly, U.S. Patent No. 4,734,858, in view of Roach et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,434,394, and further in view of Shavit et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,799,156.

On May 23, 2001, a Notice of Appeal from the Examiner to the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences, along with the requisite fees, were filed, appealing the final rejections of claims 9-20.

(5) SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is a system that manages customer orders using vendor supplied software systems in which on a real-time basis, in which communications is established between the various systems such as inventory, purchasing, order management, receipt, logistics to have continual data flow without using a vertical software interface. As a result, customer orders are received on a real-time basis using screens are are user-friendly to promptly take orders and verifying customer data.

In an embodiment of the present invention, a method is disclosed for processing customer orders in a computer-based processing system. This method includes requesting a vendor quotation and creating a blanket vendor agreement. Entering said blanket vendor agreement into an electronic catalog. Receiving a customer order from

a customer order input terminal. Processing the customer order using an interface module accessed through the customer order input terminal. This interface module coordinates access to the electronic catalog and controlling interaction between a user and the electronic catalog containing the blanket order agreement. The customer order is generated in response to data inputs from the user through said customer order input terminal and data from said electronic catalog. The inventory is automatically checked for availability of an item corresponding to the customer order in response to the customer order by accessing an inventory data base. The item is retrieved from the inventory by accessing an inventory storage location data base. A load for shipment is built from the retrieved item and delivery is scheduled for the load to the customer.

(6) ISSUES

The issues on appeal is as follows:

1. Are claims 9, 19 and 20 patentable under 35 USC §103 over Shavit et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,799,156?
2. Are claims 10-16 patentable under 35 USC §103 over Roach et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,434,394 in view of Shavit et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,799,156?
3. Are claims 17-18 patentable under 35 USC §103 over Schlafly, U.S. Patent No. 4,734,858, in view of Roach et al., U.S. Patent No.

5,434,394, and further in view of Shavit et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,799,156?

4. May the Examiner deny a request to supply a reference for elements claimed as "well known" timely made under M.P.E.P. §2144.03?

(7) GROUPING OF THE CLAIMS

1. Claims 9, 19 and 20 stand and fall together.
2. Claims 10-16 stand and fall together.
3. Claims 17 and 18 stand and fall together.

(8) ARGUMENT

Rejections of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 1§103

The Law

The test for obviousness under 35 U.S.C. §103 was set forth by the U.S. Supreme Court in Graham v. John Deere, Co., 381 US 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1956). In the Graham case, the Supreme Court set forth the following three part test as providing the background for determining obviousness:

1. determine the scope and content of the prior art;
2. ascertain the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue;
and

3. resolve the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art (Graham v. John Deere, Co., 381 US 1; 148 USPQ 459 (1966)).

Further, the burden of establishing a prima facie case of obviousness requires three basic criteria to be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teachers suggest **all** the claims limitations. (In re Vaeck, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991) (Emphasis added)).

Rejection of claims 9, 19 and 20 under 35 USC § 103

It is respectfully assert by the appellant that the Examiner has failed to establish a prima facie case of obviousness by failing to provide a reference or combination of references that disclose all the claim limitations.

In item 3, on pages 2-4 of the final office action mailed February 23, 2001, independent claim 9 was rejected under 35 USC § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Shavit et al., U.S. patent No. 4,799,156.

Shavit et al. discloses and interactive online system for processing business transactions among buyers, sellers and shippers. However, Shavit et al. does not disclose or suggest the process of requesting a vendor quotation, creating a blanket vendor order, entering the blanket vendor order into an electronic catalog, and selecting an item for purchase from the electronic catalog. In particular, Shavit et al. does not disclose or suggest creating an electronic catalog using a blanket vendor order.

As detailed on pages 49 - 52 of the specification and figures 37 - 40, the present invention provides for a process of standardizing purchasing. Through the use of blanket vendor agreements or orders an electronic catalog is automatically generated from which items may be purchased.

In the final office action mailed February 23, 2001, on page 2 the Examiner asserts that a blanket vendor order is disclosed in column 12, lines 60 - 61 and claim 8, lines 65 - 66. This is incorrect.

Claim 8 of Shavit et al. recites "wherein the sellers include distributors, wholesalers, and suppliers, and wherein the users in addition to sellers, buyers, freight service providers, and financial service providers, comprising agents, information services, commercial services, and public databases." Nothing in claim 8 appears relevant to a blanket vendor order.

Column 12, lines 60 - 61 of Shavit et al. recites "... location (RFQ), review proposals, enter an umbrella agreement, enter/command/confirm an order, inquiry and ..." It is respectfully asserted that a blanket vendor order is not the same as an order or an umbrella agreement. A blanket vendor order is an order which covers (blanket) the sale of merchandise for a number of items for possible delivery over an extended period of time. An example of a blanket vendor order is an agreement to supply all goods manufactured by a vendor over a specified time, such as all widgets produced by a factory within a calendar year. Other types of blanket vendor orders are also possible. Thus, unlike an order, a blanket vendor order may not be limited by time or amount.

Further, the final office action mailed February 23, 2001 the Examiner asserts that Shavit et al. discloses entering the blanket vendor order in the be electronic catalog in column 10, line 35; column 12, lines 54 - 59 (specifically lines 58 - 59); column 12, lines 63 - 68 (specifically lines 67 - 68); column 8, lines 48; claim 33, lines 5-9; column 16, lines 53 - 54 read with column 17, lines 21; column 13, line 37; column 15, lines 62 - 63; and column 33, line 46.

Column 10, line 35 of Shavit et al. recites "... once to perform (e.g., enter an order, inquiry about a ...". As previously discussed an order is not the same as a blanket vendor order.

Column 12, lines 54 - 59 of Shavit et al. recite "Each distributor may present its customers with different choices in its menu since the distributor made to the services it prefers to offer and the different types of databases and service levels in desires to make available. A typical distributor's menu may present catalog/price list inquiry, enter/modify request for ...". Again, the recited passage does not indicate entering a blanket vendor order into an electronic catalog.

Column 12, lines 63 - 68 of Shavit et al. recite "... s/invoices. To identify an item to be referred to after a choice is made, the system supports multiple alternative keys for accessing the same item. For example, if a part numbers not known user may enter a "?" With parts of the description, and the system will display all the items that need such description segments and allow ...". This passage describes a query utilizing a wild-card symbol which began does not disclose entering a blanket vendor order into an electronic catalog.

Column 8, lines 48 of Shavit et al. recites "... users via the distributors for orders of their products, ..." Again, the recited passage does not indicate entering a blanket vendor order into an electronic catalog.

Claim 33, lines 5-9 of Shavit et al. recite " the system of claim 32 wherein the seller information stored in the databases comprises at least some of seller catalog information, price list, inventory information, accounting information, customer credit limits, contractual terms of delivery, shipment, quantities, back ..." Again, the recited passage does not indicate entering a blanket vendor order into an electronic catalog.

Column 16, lines 53 - 54 of Shavit et al. recite "system 50 can provide freight services to suppliers, distributors, buyers, agents and any other shippers ..." Again, the recited passage does not indicate entering a blanket vendor order into an electronic catalog. Further, no reference to a blanket vendor order is made.

Column 17, line 21 of Shavit et al. recites "... the freight costs. The supplier may limit the type or ..." Again, the recited passage does not indicate entering a blanket vendor order into an electronic catalog. Further, no reference to a blanket vendor order is made.

Column 13, line 37 of Shavit et al. recites "... definition of delivery time were given a predetermined list ..." Again, the recited passage does not indicate entering a blanket vendor order into an electronic catalog. Further, no reference to a blanket vendor order is made.

Column 15, lines 62 - 63 of Shavit et al. recite "... both pricing and RFQ and confirming the availability of products as requested. When the system transmits ..."

Again, the recited passage does not indicate entering a blanket vendor order into an electronic catalog. Further, no reference to a blanket vendor order is made.

Column 33, line 46 of Shavit et al. recites "... confirmation of the availability of products went requested." Again, the recited passage does not indicate entering a blanket vendor order into an electronic catalog. Further, no reference to a blanket vendor order is made.

Even combining the foregoing disclosures its is not possible to construe that Shavit et al. discloses either a blanket vendor order or the entry of a blanket vendor order in an electronic catalog.

Therefore, claim 9 patentably distinguishes over the prior art of record by reciting "A method for creating an electronic catalog and processing purchase requests, comprising: *requesting a vendor quotation; creating a blanket vendor order; entering the blanket vendor order in the electronic catalog, wherein the electronic catalog comprises a plurality of items, quantities, shipment charges, delivery times and availabilities; creating a pre-approved budget; creating a purchase request; requesting an item from using the purchase request; communicating said order from the electronic catalog to a vendor; receiving acknowledgment of the communicated order; receiving the ordered item; and recording receipt of said item.*" (Emphasis added)

Claims 19 and 20 are allowable by virtue of their dependents on an allowable independent claim.

Therefore, reversal of the rejection of claims 9, 19 and 20 under 35 USC § 103 (a) as unpatentable over Shavit et al. is respectfully requested for failure of the Examiner to meet all claim limitations.

Rejection of claims 10 – 16 under 35 USC § 103 (a)

It is respectfully assert by the appellant that the Examiner has failed to establish a prima facie case of obviousness by failing to provide a reference or combination of references that disclose all the claim limitations.

In item 4, on pages 5 - 12 of the office action mailed February 23, 2001, claims 10 - 16 were rejected under 35 USC § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Roach et al., U.S. patent No. 5,434,394, in view of Shavit et al., U.S. patent No. 4,799,156. Reversal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Roach et al. discloses a system for processing merchandise sales and delivery from a warehouse. Shavit et al. discloses and interactive online system for processing business transactions among buyers, sellers and shippers. However, neither Roach et al. nor Shavit et al. in combination disclose or suggest the creation of an electronic catalog based on a blanket vendor agreement.

In the office action mailed on February 23, 2001, Shavit et al. is relied upon as disclosing what creation of electronic catalog based on a blanket vendor agreement. For the reasons previously supplied in the discussion of the rejection of claim 9, incorporated herein by reference, Shavit et al. does not disclose or suggest either the blanket vendor agreement or creation of an electronic catalog based on a blanket vendor agreement.

Therefore, claim 10 patentably distinguishes over the prior art of record by reciting "A system for creating an electronic catalog, comprising: means for purchasing an item; means for creating a graphical user interface for a customer service representative to input an order; means for tendering a load to a carrier for shipment;

means for creating an automated warehousing ticket; and means for creating an electronic catalog based on a blanket vendor agreement, wherein said electronic catalog comprises a plurality of items, quantities, shipment charges, delivery times and availabilities.” (Emphasis added)

Claims 11 – 16 also recite patentably distinguishing features over the combination of Roach et al. and Shavit et al. In particular, as exemplified by claims 11, the combination of Roach et al. and Shavit et al. does not disclose or suggest “means for processing the requisition request by comparing said requisition request to the blanket vendor agreement to determine the availability of the item”. (Emphasis added)

Therefore, reversal of the rejection of claims 10 - 16 under 35 USC § 103 (a) as unpatentable over Roach et al. in view of Shavit et al. is respectfully requested.

Rejection of Claims 17 and 18 under 35 USC §103

It is respectfully assert by the appellant that the Examiner has failed to establish a prima facie case of obviousness by failing to provide a reference or combination of references that disclose all the claim limitations.

In item 5, on pages 12-15, claims 17 and 18 are rejected under 35 USC §103 as unpatentable over Schlafly in view of Roach et al. and further in view of Shavit et al.

Schlafly discloses a pocket size data terminal for ordering of goods and services. Roach et al. discloses a system for processing merchandise sales and delivery from a warehouse. Shavit et al. discloses and interactive online system for processing business transactions among buyers, sellers and shippers. However, neither Schlafly

nor Roach et al. nor Shavit et al. in combination disclose or suggest the creation of an electronic catalog based on a blanket vendor agreement.

In the office action mailed on February 23, 2001, Shavit et al. is relied upon as disclosing the creation of electronic catalog based on a blanket vendor agreement. For the reasons previously supplied in the discussion of the rejection of claim 9, incorporated herein by reference, Shavit et al. does not disclose or suggest either the blanket vendor agreement or creation of an electronic catalog based on a blanket vendor agreement.

Therefore, claims 17 and 18 patentably distinguish over the prior art of record by reciting, as exemplified by claim 17, "A method for processing customer orders in a computer-based processing system having a plurality of data processing devices electrically connected to communicate with each other, comprising: requesting a vendor quotation; creating a blanket vendor agreement; entering said blanket vendor agreement into an electronic catalog; ... scheduling delivery of the load to the customer." (Emphasis added)

Therefore, reversal of the rejection of claims 17 and 18 is respectfully requested.

MPEP §2144.03 "Well Known" Prior Art

Starting with the response filed on June 21, 2000 (pages 12 and 14) to the office action mailed March 21, 2000 the appellant has timely requested under M.P.E.P. §2144.03 that a reference be supplied for all claim elements asserted by the Examiner as being well known prior art. This request was again repeated in the response filed Dec. 11, 2000 (pages 12-13, and 15-16) to the office action mailed September 11,

2000. In the office actions mailed March 21, 2000, Dec. 11, 2000, and February 23, 2001, the Examiner has refused to provide such references indicating in item 5 of the office section mailed September 11, 2000 that the appellant has "not provided adequate information or argument so that on its face it creates a reasonable doubt regarding the circumstances justifying the official notice." Further, in item 6.B. of the office action mailed February 23, 2001, Examiner asserts that "applicant is charged with **rebutting** the well-known statement in the next response after the office action in which the well-known statement was made." Therefore, the Examiner apparently is of the opinion that the burden of proof must fall upon the appellant to demonstrate that the claimed feature is not well-known. Since it is impossible to prove a negative the appellant asserts that the Examiner has misinterpreted M.P.E.P. § 2144.03. M.P.E.P. § 2143.03 states:

"If justified the examiner should not be obliged to spend time to produce documentary proof. If the knowledge is of such notorious character that official notice can be taken, it is sufficient so to state. In re Malcolm, 129 F.2d 529, 54 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1942). **If the applicant traverses such an assertion the examiner should cite a reference and support of his or her position.**" (Emphasis added)

M.P.E.P. § 2143.03 further states:

"A seasonable challenge constitutes a demand for evidence made as soon as practicable during prosecution." (Emphasis added)

The appellant has seasonably challenged the Examiner's contention of well known prior art by demanding the production of a reference, the Examiner acted improperly in refusing to produce such a reference.

Since the Examiner has failed to produce a reference indicating the creating of a pre-approved budget is well known in the art, particularly in the context of the creation of an electronic catalog, the Examiner has failed to establish a prima facie case of obviousness by failing to provide a prior art reference (or references when combined) that teaches or suggests **all** the claims limitations.

Therefore, reversal of the rejection of claims 9, 19 and 20 under 35 USC § 103 (a) as unpatentable over Shavit et al. as well as the rejection of claims 10 - 16 under 35 USC § 103 (a) as unpatentable over Roach et al. in view of Shavit et al. is respectfully requested for failure of the Examiner to meet all claim limitations.


(9) SUMMARY

In summary, it is submitted that claims 9, 19 and 20 patentably distinguish over Shavit et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,799,156 under 35 USC §103. Further, it is submitted that claims 10-16 patentably distinguish over Roach et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,434,394 in view of Shavit et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,799,156, under 35 USC §103. Still further, it is submitted that claims 17-18 patentably distinguish over Schlaflly, U.S. Patent No. 4,734,858, in view of Roach et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,434,394, and further in view of Shavit et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,799,156 under 35 USC §103.

It is respectfully requested that the Examiner's rejections claims 9, 19 and 20 under 35 USC §103 as unpatentable over Shavit et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,799,156, claims 10-16 under 35 USC §103 as unpatentable over Roach et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,434,394 in view of Shavit et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,799,156, and claims 17-18 under 35 USC §103 as unpatentable over Schlaflly, U.S. Patent No. 4,734,858, in view of

Roach et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,434,394, and further in view of Shavit et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,799,156. be reversed.

Respectfully submitted,



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APPENDIX TO APPEAL BRIEF U.S. SERIAL NO. 08/765,508

9. A method for creating an electronic catalog and processing purchase requests, comprising:

requesting a vendor quotation;

creating a blanket vendor order;

entering the blanket vendor order in the electronic catalog, wherein the electronic catalog comprises a plurality of items, quantities, shipment charges, delivery times and availabilities;

creating a pre-approved budget;

creating a purchase request;

requesting an item from the plurality of items electronic catalog using the purchase request;

communicating said order from the electronic catalog to a vendor;

receiving acknowledgment of the communicated order;

receiving the ordered item; and

recording receipt of said item.

10. A system for creating an electronic catalog, comprising:

means for purchasing an item;

means for creating a graphical user interface for a customer service representative to input an order;

means for tendering a load to a carrier for shipment;

means for creating an automated warehousing ticket; and
means for creating an electronic catalog based on a blanket vendor agreement,
wherein said electronic catalog comprises a plurality of items, quantities, shipment
charges, delivery times and availabilities.

11. The system of claim 10, wherein the means for purchasing an item further
comprises:

- means for creating a blanket vendor order;
- means for providing user input to generate a requisition request to requisition the
item;
- means for processing the requisition request by comparing said requisition
request to the blanket vendor agreement to determine the availability of the item;
- means for checking the availability of funds against a budget to approve a
purchase transaction;
- means for communicating a purchase request and a purchase release to a
vendor; and
- means for acknowledging the purchase request.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein the means for purchasing an item further
comprises:

- means for receiving the item;
- means for creating a record of the receipt;

means for creating an accounts payable record initiated by said record of receipt;

and

means for placing the item in an inventory.

13. The system of claim 10, wherein the means for creating a graphical user interface for a customer service representative, further comprises:

means for creating screens in a window context with multiple files, said screens having buttons to control access to files, wherein said buttons are used to access customer records.

14. The system of claim 10, wherein the means for tendering a load to a carrier for shipment further comprises:

means for creating a carrier data base containing information to determine shipping costs and delivery schedules;

means for tendering an offer of shipment to a selected carrier; and

means for receiving confirmation from the carrier.

15. The system of claim 10, wherein the means for creating an automated warehousing ticket further comprises:

means for generating pick-order data for an item;

means for picking the item from an inventory;

means for creating a record of the picked item;

means for transmitting said pick-order data to a central data base in real time;

means for delivering the picked item to a shipping point;
means for transmitting data representing delivery of the item for shipment to said data base; and
means for consolidating said pick-order and shipment data into a record in said database.

16. The system of claim 10, wherein the means for creating an electronic catalog further comprises:

means for requesting a vendor quotation;
means for creating a blanket vendor agreement having a plurality of items, quantities, shipment charges, delivery times and availabilities;
means for entering said blanket vendor agreement into the electronic catalog;
means for creating a pre-approved budget;
means for creating a purchase request;
means for requesting an item from the electronic catalog;
means for communicating said blanket order to a vendor;
means for receiving acknowledgment of a blank order request;
means for receiving said ordered item; and
means for receiving receipt of said item.

17. A method for processing customer orders in a computer-based processing system having a plurality of data processing devices electrically connected to communicate with each other, comprising:

requesting a vendor quotation;
creating a blanket vendor agreement;
entering said blanket vendor agreement into an electronic catalog;
receiving a customer order from a customer order input terminal;
processing the customer order using an interface module accessed through the customer order input terminal, said interface module coordinating access to the electronic catalog and controlling interaction between a user and said electronic catalog;

generating the customer order in response to data inputs from the user through said customer order input terminal and data from said electronic catalog;

automatically checking an inventory for availability of an item corresponding to the customer order in response to the customer order by accessing an inventory data base;

retrieving the item from the inventory by accessing an inventory storage location data base;

building a load for shipment from the retrieved item; and
scheduling delivery of the load to the customer.

18. A method for a processing customer order using a networked computer-based data processing system, comprising:

requesting a vendor quotation;

creating a blanket vendor order;

entering said blanket vendor order into an electronic catalog;

receiving a customer order from a customer order input terminal;
processing the received customer order to generate a customer order in
response to data inputs from a user;
automatically checking an inventory for availability of an item corresponding to
the customer order by accessing the electronic catalog;
retrieving the item by accessing an inventory storage location data base;
building a load for shipment containing the retrieved item; and
scheduling the load for delivery to the customer.

19. A method as recited in claim 9, further comprising:
creating an accounts payable record initiated by said record of receipt; and
placing the item in an inventory.

20. A method as recited in claim 9, wherein receiving the order further
comprises:
creating a carrier data base containing information to determine shipping costs
and delivery schedules;
tending an offer of shipment to a selected carrier; and
receiving confirmation from the carrier.